THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) and (b) Reports of malpractices by the Chief Flying Instructor (CFI) of M/s. Carver Aviation Academy were duly investigated by Dierctorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA). Investigation revealed irregularity in the functioning of the academy, including improper logging of flying records, issue of fake certificates, non-compliance or rules and procedures, unauthorised night - flying, manipulation of records and lack of proper monitoring system.

(c) to (e) Pending investigation, the licence of the academy was suspended by DGCA. The CFI status of Capt. Ashim Taxali was withdrawn. However, in view of the fact that the management of the institute themselves detected the malpractices and reported to the local police authorities and keeping in view the career prospects of trainees enrolled with the institute, the suspension of the licence was revoked after assurance from the academy of a strict monitoring system. DGCA has been directed to ensure that these systems are in place.

Grounding of overweight Air Hostesses

*92. SHRIMATI HEMA MALINI: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government is aware that overweight air hostesses of State-run carrier of India have been grounded; and

(b) if so, the number of such air hostesses grounded and what will be their future?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) and (b) As on February, 2008, there are 22 airhostesses of erstwhile Indian Airlines, 16 airhostesses of erstwhile Air India and 5 airhostesses of Alliance Air who are groudned due to being over weight. Such cabin crew are asked to reappear for weight check periodically and are assigned flight duty once they conform to the prescribed weight lmits. Cabin crew who continue to remain overweight are evaluated by a duly constituted Medical Board and based on its assessment and recommendations, further action is taken as per the Terms of Employment.

Criteria for setting up new airports in the country

*93. SHRI KALRAJ MISHRA:
SHRI SANTOSH BAGRODIA:

Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government plans to develop 500 new airports in the country; and

(b) if so, the details as to number of airports per State and also what is the criteria for selection of different airports for development?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) and (b) Considering the robust growth in civil aviation in the country in recent years and likelihood of this trend to continue in near future, efforts are being made to augment airport infrastructure all over the country. Two greenfield airports at Bangalore and Hyderabad in Public Private Partnership (PPP) are under consideration and expected to be commissioned shortly. Delhi and Mumbai airports have been restructured and are being expanded and modernized in Public Private Partnership (PPP).

"In principle" approvals have been accorded for greenfield airports at Navi Mumbai, Maharashtra, Mopa in Goa and Kannur in Kerala. A proposal received from Government of Uttar Pradesh for setting up of a greenfield airport at Jewar in Gautam Buddha Nagar District, is under consideration. Proposals of new airports at Hassan, Bijapur, Shimoga and Gulbarga in Karnataka are under process for "in principle" approval. Many State Governments have indicated that they are in the process of formulating proposals for several new airports.

Airports Authority of India (AAI) has been mandated to construct three new airports in the North-Eastern States.

Subsidies to BPL families

†*94. SHRI PYARELAL KHANDELWAL: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that benefits of different kinds of subsidy being extended to Below Poverty Line families/consumers in the country is not reaching them;

(b) if so, whether Government proposes to reconsider different kinds of subsidy being provided by Government; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM: (a) the food subsidies are largely designed to be targeted to people Below the Poverty Line (BPL). The other two major subsidies, namely fertilizer and petroleum, particularly subsidy on LPG are available to all users/consumers. A study by Programme Evaluation Organisation (PEO) of the Planning Commission regarding the Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS), which covered 18 states, reveals that though the offtake per household has shown improvement under TPDS, yet only about 57 per cent of the BPL households are covered by it. Further the report finds that only about 42 per cent of the subsidized grains issued from the Central Pool reaches the target group.

(b) and (c) Based on evaluation studies and feedback received from states, a nine-point action plan has been jointly formulated by the Central and State/UT Governments to strengthen the TPDS. These include regular reviews of the BPL and Antyodaya Anna Yojana (AAY) lists to ensure coverage of eligible families, involvement of Panchayati Raj Institutions in the public distribution system (PDS) operations, use of information technology, creating awareness among public about PDS operations, etc.

Mud clay pack treatment on Taj Mahal

*95. SHRI AMIR ALAM KHAN: Will the Minister of CULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government has started the mud clay pack treatment on the Taj Mahal, which has become due now;

(b) if so, the details thereof alongwith the cost involved and schedule date of completion of work;

(c) whether Government has made any feasibility study of some other countries to know the effectiveness of mud clay pack on the white marble;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.